

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6217

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, January 29, 2026

Title: An act relating to expanding access to the Washington college grant to students enrolled in eligible postsecondary nondegree credential programs.

Brief Description: Expanding access to the Washington college grant to students enrolled in eligible postsecondary nondegree credential programs.

Sponsors: Senators Boehnke, Slatter, Conway, Dozier, Nobles, Saldaña, Valdez and Wilson, C.; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/26/26, 1/29/26 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows an eligible individual enrolled in an eligible postsecondary nondegree credential program to qualify for the Washington College Grant.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Nobles, Chair; Hansen, Vice Chair; Warnick, Ranking Member; Boehnke and Slatter.

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: Washington College Grant. The Washington College Grant (WCG) is the state's largest financial aid program and provides awards to low-income students to pursue

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postsecondary education. The WCG is an entitlement program with guaranteed awards for students who qualify. The WCG award amount varies based on the institution the student attends and the student's family income.

An eligible student may receive a WCG for six years or up to 150 percent of the published length of the student's program. Part-time students receive prorated awards.

The WCG is also available to individuals enrolled in registered apprenticeship programs. Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, the maximum award for those in the Washington College Grant for Apprenticeship is 50 percent of the maximum WCG award for students attending public community and technical colleges. The award may be used for tuition and fees, program supplies and equipment, and other costs that facilitate educational endeavors.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in the 2027-28 academic year, an individual enrolled in an eligible postsecondary nondegree credential program, as determined by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in consultation with the Washington Student Achievement Council, may qualify for the WCG.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: A single postsecondary credential has a huge monetary impact on the amount of money a person can make in their life.

Estimates are, over the last 20 years, we are not replacing the number of people that need to be in construction trades. The program at South Puget Sound Community College is getting people ready for the jobs needed in the workforce. This bill will help.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Matt Boehnke, Prime Sponsor; Arlen Harris; Dr. Timothy Stokes, President, South Puget Sound Community College; Damion Doyle, Instructor, Construction Trades, SPSCC; Chris Wells, United Way of Thurston County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: PRO: Daimon Doyle, SPSCC.